

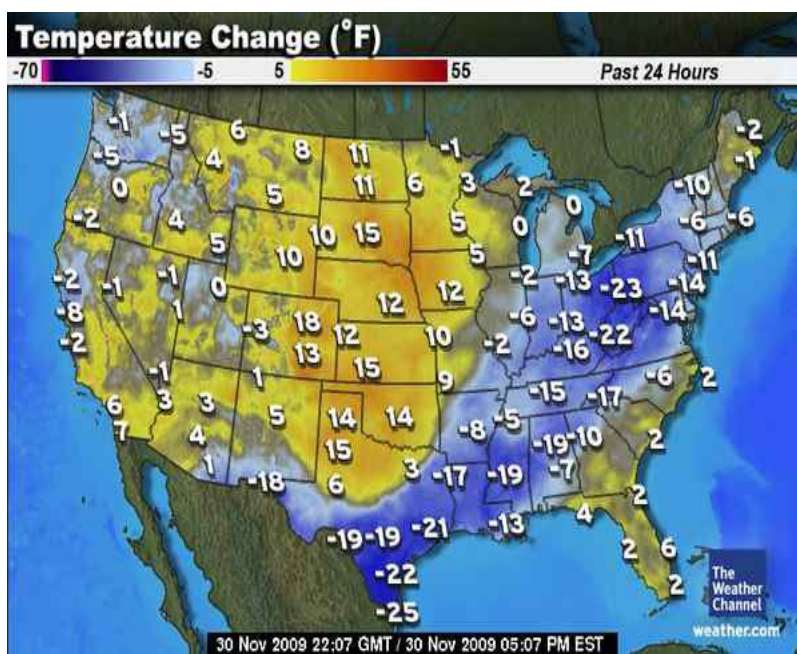
SCHOOL PRODUCE NEWSFLASH:

1 DECEMBER 2009



I. GENERAL OUTLOOK:

A. WEATHER:



High pressure out West following the cold storm system over the weekend will keep the region clear and sunny this week. The Southwestern Desert regions will see near seasonal temperatures in the mid 70s through the week. These regions received a sparse dusting of rainfall over the weekend. Overnight lows in the 40s to high 30s are forecast with the coldest mornings expected mid week. There remains a slight possibility of morning frost in these regions on Wednesday and Thursday. In the Southeast a fairly pleasant start to the week is forecast with high temperatures in the mid 70s in the Northern regions to low 80s in Central and Southern Florida with a chance of showers the front part of the week. Big changes are forecast however on Wednesday. A storm front is expected to move through the Deep South on Wednesday bringing a line of strong thundershowers to the region mid week. This squall line is expected to bring significant rain and winds to the region. High pressure behind this system will usher in cooler temperatures from the north along with winds to finish out the week.

B. TRANSPORTATION:



The availability of eastbound trucks in California, Washington and Idaho have loosened up some especially in CA. Crude oil prices remain steady and are currently at \$77.31 per barrel down .35 cents since last Wednesday. The National Average on diesel went down slightly to \$2.775, a decrease of 1.2 cents.

C. USA GROWN PRODUCE



VALUE ADDED: Processors continue to purchase as much broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce and romaine as possible. Traditionally, the first week of transition is hectic with processors. Complaints continue to be reported on the chopped romaine not having as long a shelf life as in past months. The cauliflower and broccoli raw product will get even tighter as Salinas finishes production. Brown spotting on cauliflower florets and yellowing and pale color on broccoli florets will be common issues talked about with these products.

Romaine & Leaf: Romaine Lettuce pricing up to \$50.00 plus per case!!!

As the Salinas and Huron season have finished, we now put pressure on the Santa Maria, Oxnard and Yuma areas to come up with the already limited supplies of leaf. The same issues continue with romaine having such defects as brown spotting, brown to red discoloration up the rib, brown butts, fringe burn and internal burn. Green leaf supplies are better than all other leaf items. Continue to expect defects on leaf items over the next couple of weeks with production from Yuma. Also weights on all leaf are very light.

D. USA GROWN PRODUCE QUALITY AND PRICING:



<u>COMMODITY</u>	<u>QUALITY</u>	<u>PRICING</u>
Apples	Excellent	Steady
Bell Peppers (Eastern)	Good	Lower
Strawberries	Fair/Good	Steady
Broccoli	Fair	Higher
Carrots	Good	Higher
Cauliflower	Fair	Higher
Celery	Good	Steady
Lemons	Good	Steady
Oranges	Good	Steady
Cucumbers (Eastern)	Good	Steady
Grapes	Good	Higher
Kiwi	Good	Steady
Lettuce, Leaf	Fair	Higher
Lettuce, Iceberg	Fair	Higher
Onions	Good	Steady
Pears	Excellent	Steady
Potatoes	Good	Steady
Squash (Eastern)	Good	Lower
Tomatoes (Eastern)	Fair-Good	Higher

E. USA GROWING AND MARKET CONDITIONS



- ✓ **APPLES & PEARS:** Pre sized bins on all apples out of Washington State continue to yield large fruit. Most all varieties are packing out 72s to 88s and larger with very few cases per bin in the small sizes. This will be a season long issue and could generate shortages on small sized fruit for the duration of the Washington State apple crop. Overall crop shortages (upwards of 5 million cartons over the season) will also contribute to the low levels of small fruit available.
- ✓ **AVOCADOES:** California fruit should begin with light harvest sometime in late December.
- ✓ **BROCCOLI:** Supplies have tightened up in Santa Maria and Salinas. Yuma has started production but supplies will not increase until next week. Expect the availability on this commodity to be sporadic over the next few weeks as the transition to Yuma begins.
- ✓ **CAULIFLOWER:** Supplies are much tighter on this commodity in Salinas and Santa Maria. Yuma has started production but supplies will not increase until next week. Expect the availability on this commodity to be sporadic over the next few weeks as the transition to Yuma begins.
- ✓ **CARROTS:** California Carrots coming out of Bakersfield are sizing slower due to cooler weather. Jumbo market is firming up.
- ✓ **CITRUS:** The orange market is steady with lighter supplies of 113s and smaller as the early fruit is larger in size peaking on 72s, 88s followed by 56s and thus smaller fruit is much stronger. The overall quality keeps getting better every day as we have had some cool weather pass through the valley to help bring on the color and allowing us to have less gassing hours. The crop looks excellent and we will have excellent eating fruit for the holiday season. The Lemon market is steady.
- ✓ **CELERY:** Some suppliers are attempting to raise the pricing due to holiday ads that are in progress. Overall, the market is stable. This market is stable. Production is occurring in Santa Maria, Oxnard and Salinas. Oxnard has the best production numbers but there are options to purchase at different regions. Overall, the market is stable. The quality continues to be strong with no major issues to report.

- ✓ **CUCUMBERS:** The cucumber market, like much of the east, is suffering from heavy supply. Efforts to compete with the low prices out of Nogales will keep the Cucumber market on or near the floor for this week.
- ✓ **GRAPES:** The domestic Green Seedless crop is all but finished for the season with the exception of a few lots that should be loaded with caution. Domestic California Red Seedless grapes (Crimson) are still available, but they are winding down very quickly and markets are rising. Expect supplies to wind down and be finished by the end of week 50 (approximately December 11th)*. Demand is strong again this week for red seedless. Market levels for green seedless will continue at higher levels this week and could elevate. The Grape market is very strong on all varieties, with green grapes being the strongest as the market is demand exceeds supply. The fruit quality is still good and fruit is eating excellent. The California deal will try and stretch into the second week of December as Chile will be later than normal with less volume as they have had some cold weather.
- ✓ **KIWI:** California Kiwi supplies are still very good and there is also Italian Kiwi available on the East Coast. The market will remain steady with strong demand, and quality continues to be very good.
- ✓ **LETTUCE:** This market is extremely active. Salinas and Huron seasons have finished production. Now all production is coming from Yuma, Arizona. The weather in Yuma continues with cool mornings with ice in the fields. This is affecting head size and weights, with most cartons weighing in the high 30 pound range. The quality is showing some puffy lettuce which makes it more prone to mechanical damage, bruising and discoloration due to the lack of solidity. We expect supplies to continue to be light. This week trucks should expect delays throughout the week and next. Product will be arriving to the coolers at a slower than normal pace.
- ✓ **ONIONS:** Demand remains light with good quality out of Idaho and Washington. The market is staying steady with Washington keeping the prices low due to ample supplies and good quality.
- ✓ **PEPPERS:** Volume in Florida remains good, with the market continuing to soften. With little demand on the east for bells but plentiful supply we should see this market continue to drop through the week.
- ✓ **POTATOES:** Product quality is excellent. Product is available but some shippers are a little limited coming out of the Holiday weekend. Idaho is steady on supplies of Norkotahs which is still the main varietal, but Burbanks are available as well. Washington Colorado is going strong with new crop supplies as well. Mount Vernon, Washington with good availability; product quality is excellent. North Dakota and Wisconsin have good supplies of red, yellow and white potatoes.
- ✓ **SQUASH:** Florida has abundant supply and there is dealing on both colors of squash. Yellow, however, has been suffering the quality defects caused by past winds and rain. This market should be steady through the week.
- ✓ **STRAWBERRIES:** The Northern growing areas (Salinas/Watsonville) are done for the season for the most part. The cool weather we are getting up and down the coast of California is

slowing down the harvest. Market is starting to firm up. Supplies will be limited for the next two weeks. Strawberries are still being harvested in Santa Maria and Oxnard.. Quality is fair to good. Look for supplies to increase the second week in December.

- ✓ **TOMATOES:** In the east, supplies in Florida continue be well below typical levels, with an expected increase in market pricing. Florida growers are experiencing major problems with reduced yields, dropping to 25% from normal averages. Both central and southern growing areas are looking at gradual improvement in December, but will have to wait until then to see how the market will adjust. The majority of the supply concerns Rounds, Grape and Cherry tomatoes and is directly related to the high temperatures we encountered at the end of September, early October which caused a bloom drop, thus reflecting in lower yields and reduced volume. The overall quality is good. There is a lack of bigger sized tomatoes. All round supplies are down anywhere from 40 to 50 percent. There has been an increase in the Roma supplies and availability.

➤ **VITAMIN D-ENRICHED MUSHROOMS:**

Mushrooms are a great ingredient and they now provide a great source of vitamin D. Mushrooms are one of the few items that contain vitamin D. Scientists discovered the ultraviolet light found in sunlight can boost levels of vitamin D in mushrooms. The natural process of enriching mushrooms by briefly exposing mushrooms grown in the dark to a light for five minutes can boost existing vitamin D levels in a 3 ounce serving to 100% of the Daily Value of 400 IU. Consumers can cook vitamin D-enriched mushrooms the same way as traditional mushrooms. Research suggests vitamin D can reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes. It also may help promote a healthy immune system and reduce the risk for colorectal, prostate, breast and lung cancers.”

Here are some guidelines on storage temps for fruits & vegetables:

- **FRUITS & VEGETABLES:** 32-40 degrees-apples, berries, cantaloupe, cherries, grapes, kiwifruit, nectarines, peaches, (ripe pears), fresh cut pineapples, strawberries and watermelon. Asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, garlic, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, onions, parsley, spinach and sprouts.
- **FRUITS & VEGETABLES:** 40-50 degrees- ripe avocados, green beans, cucumbers, ginger root, honeydews, lemons, cantaloupe, California oranges, peppers, potatoes, zucchini and yellow squash and ripe tomatoes.
- **DID YOU KNOW:** a pink (and eventually brown) discoloration along the cut edges of the lettuce is generally caused by too much oxygen in the bag. The normal cause of this is the presence of a whole in the bag (no matter how small). To avoid this problem, keep the product in the original box until ready to use.
- **FOOD SAFETY:** the ideal storage temperature is 34 degrees for fresh cut processed lettuce. Wetness can be linked to temperature abuse which causes the product to respire and deteriorate at a faster rate.

PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE QUIZ:

At what temperature can bananas show effects of chill damage: _____

- a. Below 40 degrees
- b. Depends on the color stage
- c. Below 56 degrees
- d. Will not change after stage 4

Which of the following factors is the single most important factor in maintaining and maximizing produce quality: _____

- a. Proper handling
- b. Product rotation
- c. Temperature
- d. Storage conditions

Which of the following fruits do not ripen after harvest: _____

- a. Bananas
- b. Cantaloupe
- c. Strawberries
- d. Pears
- e. Honeydew

Which of the following for processed vegetables temperature control is not true: _____?

- a. Temperature abuse is the cause of most produce claims and losses
- b. For every 10 degree increase in temperature a produce item can lose up to half its life
- c. Proper rotation practices must be followed in order to keep produce fresh
- d. The oldest product should be used first according to the FIFO method (First-In, First Out)
- e. For fresh-cut vegetables the correct storage temperature is between 40-50 degrees

Quality issues to watch for in processed fresh-cut lettuce: _____

- a. Wetness of cut lettuce in processed lettuce bag can be linked to temperature abuse which causes the product to respire and deteriorate at a faster rate
- b. A pink (and eventually brown) discoloration along the cut edges of the lettuce is generally caused by too much oxygen in the bag.
- c. Small brown pieces of cut lettuce are often caused by a quality defect in the raw product called tip burn.
- d. A sweet smell occurs in processed cut-lettuce when a film (bag) starves the product of oxygen which disrupts normal lettuce metabolism.
- e. All the above

-----Signed-----

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